

**Solano County Probation Department
Juvenile Detention & New Foundations Facilities
2006-2007 Solano County Grand Jury**

Reason for Inspection

California Penal Code §919 subsection (b) provides: “The grand jury shall inquire into the condition and management of the public prisons within the county.” Pursuant to the statute, the 2006-2007 Grand Jury inspected the Juvenile Detention and New Foundations Facilities at 740 Beck Avenue, Fairfield, California.

Grand Jury Actions

- Interviewed the Chief Probation Officer
- Met with the Superintendent, staff, and counselors of Juvenile Detention and New Foundations Facilities
- Toured the Juvenile Detention and New Foundation Facilities
- Met and spoke with several minors in the facilities
- Reviewed the facilities’ policy and procedure manuals

Background / Summary

The Juvenile Detention Facility (Juvenile Hall) and the New Foundations Facility (New Foundations) are divisions of the Solano County Probation Department (Probation Department). The purpose of these facilities is to provide detention for youths charged with serious crimes, who otherwise cannot be safely released to the community and are likely to flee the jurisdiction of the Court. They also provide post-disposition detention for youths awaiting placement to other types of residential care, quality education, vocational assessment, and learning opportunities. The facilities’ policies and procedures comply with the standards in Title 15 and Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations pertaining to juvenile offenders. Juvenile Court Law, Solano County, and the Probation Department also establish procedures and guidelines for consistency and uniformity in the day-to-day operation of the facilities.

Juvenile Hall

This facility houses minimum to maximum security level minors and has a capacity of 90. On the day of our visit, there were 95 minors, 76 males and 19 females. The staff ratio was one duty staff member to 10 minors to include a Senior Counselor and several Group Counselors as required by law.

All minors, age 12-18 years, accepted for booking into Juvenile Hall, undergo a pat-down search prior to placement in a holding cell. The facility has a Sally Port for the transport of minors from police department holding cells. Visual safety checks are conducted every 10 minutes and documented accordingly. Within one hour of booking, minors are given the opportunity to make three phone calls; to a parent or guardian, an employer, and an attorney. Juveniles must have a court hearing within 72 hours after their arrest.

Every minor detained in Juvenile Hall must be entered immediately into the Case Program as part of the intake process. This Program is a Solano County database that contains information on minors that have been or are currently on probation in the county. Additionally, all minors must be medically screened with written medical clearance before being booked into the facility.

As of August 15, 2006, Solano County instituted policies and procedures requiring every minor in Juvenile Hall to have a Medical CASE Identification printout and picture. This confirms and identifies all incoming minors for medication issuance by the nursing staff. The nurses are on duty daily between 7:00am and 11:00pm. A doctor is present at various intervals, but is always on-call. Mental health counselors, probation officers, and other professionals and staff are available as needed and may take part in the processing and placement of a minor into Juvenile Hall.

A minor is assigned to one of four Pods (housing units within the facility) in a manner that provides for their individual safety as well as the safety of other minors, staff, and the public. Several factors are considered when assigning a minor to a Pod, such as:

- Security classification
- Special modification or mental health needs
- Gender, age, weight
- Maturity level
- Legal status
- Suspected of having a communicable disease
- Case is high profile/type of offense
- Gang affiliation

New Foundations

This facility's program is an intensive program that addresses the educational needs of detained juveniles in Solano County. It has a bed capacity of 30. New Foundations academic program operates under the authority of the Solano County Superintendent of Schools. The programs must comply with the State Education Code and the County Board of Education. Minors are evaluated to determine individual educational needs and they must be enrolled in a program within three school days after their detention.

Minors can earn high school credits toward a diploma. The Exit exam required for high school students is available to the minors at the facility.

The facility's new employees, after their initial orientation and training, are required to train at Juvenile Hall and receive additional training supervised by the Chief Probation Officer.

New Foundations has a full service program designed to provide a safe and caring, therapeutic group living experience, incorporating psychological, psychiatric, recreational, and social services aimed at supporting and reunifying families. All activities are designed to promote self-discipline, self-esteem, respect, and accountability for each minor. Minors are encouraged to communicate with their families. Active involvement by the family is an intricate part of the treatment program. Ongoing family counseling through a series of group conferences and home visits assists the minor and family to understand their family dynamics. The

counselors and probation officers also use the counseling sessions to evaluate home furloughs and establish criteria for a minor's release.

This facility functions on a point system that focuses on behavior modification. Points are earned on a weekly basis during specific hours based on good behavior. A minor can advance through four phase levels to earn release; Phase 4 is the highest. It takes approximately one month to advance one level provided all required points are earned. Furloughs are a privilege and may be given for those achieving Phase 3 and Phase 4.

A report is required, by statute, when overcrowding exceeds maximum capacity for more than 15 calendar days in any single month. The Assistant Superintendent filed a report regarding the overcrowding in Juvenile Hall with the California Corrections Standards Authority in September 2006. At the time of our visit in November 2006, a second report was being prepared.

New Foundations was not experiencing overcrowding at the time of our visit.

A pre-site inspection of the new Juvenile Detention Facility was conducted prior to occupancy in 2004 by The Institute for Medical Quality. Other regulatory agencies conducted the required annual inspections for both facilities in 2006.

Findings and Recommendations

Finding 1 - On the day of our visit both facilities appeared clean, neat, and well organized.

Recommendation 1 - Solano County Probation Department should continue to keep up the good work.

Finding 2 - On the day of our inspection, Juvenile Hall was overcrowded.

Recommendation 2 - Solano County Probation Department should review processes and procedures for all juvenile facilities they administer to avoid overcrowding.

Finding 3 - Minors released to society are not tracked.

Recommendation 3 - Solano County Probation Department should track the success or failure of minors in order to measure the effectiveness of the programs they administer.

Comments

The Probation Department administers all juvenile detention facilities for Solano County. Proper use of all available beds could reduce overcrowding at any or all facilities.

We commend the Probation Department for its efforts to administer statutory law, and policy and procedures. Hopefully the department will be successful in getting more parental involvement.

Affected Agencies

- Solano County Probation Department
- Juvenile Detention Facility
- New Foundations Facility

Courtesy Copy

Solano County Board of Supervisors
Solano County Juvenile Court